

# ACT Public Education Awards

- 2026 -



## Guidelines



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## Key Dates

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Term/Week</b>
Nominations open	15 June 2026	Term 2/Week 9
Nominations close	24 August 2026	Term 3/Week 6
Awards Ceremony	23 October 2026	Term 4/Week 2

## Nomination support

ACT Public Education Awards team

Email: [EducationAwards@act.gov.au](mailto:EducationAwards@act.gov.au)

Phone: 6205 5570



## Award categories

There are 16 award categories:

- Excellence in Cultural Integrity
- Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion
- Early Childhood Teacher of the Year
- Primary Teacher of the Year
- Secondary/College Teacher of the Year
- School Leader of the Year
- New Educator of the Year
- Mentor of the Year
- Learning Support Person of the Year
- School Support Person of the Year
- Education Support Office Employee of the Year
- Allied Health Professional of the Year
- Volunteer of the Year
- Excellence in Innovation
- Outstanding Partnership of the Year
- Excellence in Leading Impact across our One Public Education System

In addition, the Director-General selects a winner from one of the above categories to award the ***Director-General's Excellence Award***.

## Nomination process

### Who can nominate?

Nominations are welcomed from students, members of the community, colleagues and employees of the ACT Education Directorate.

Self-nominations or nominations submitted for a member of immediate family or a relative will not be accepted.

### How do I nominate someone?

To nominate someone, please complete the nomination form for the relevant category. Nomination forms can be found at [ACT Public Education Awards](#).

### What should I include in my nomination?

Each category specifies what assessment criteria will be examined. There is additional information within the form to assist you with what the criteria might include. Further information may be found at Appendix A of this document.

- Describe the role and responsibilities of the person as it relates to each criteria
- Outline examples of what the nominee/s does to demonstrate excellence against each criteria



- Talk about the actions the individual/team has taken, what changes they may have made, what they have done to make a difference
- Describe the impact of how the actions have helped students, colleagues, the school or their community
- Detail how the individual/team collaborated to achieve a result
- Provide enough information to help tell the panel about the nominee and their work – they may not have a firsthand knowledge of the person or team
- Where possible, provide facts or data to support your examples.

### How do I know if my nomination has been received?

Both the nominator and nominee will receive an email to advise them that a nomination has been received. This will occur within one week of the nomination being received.

### Who do I talk to if I have questions about my nomination?

Please contact the ACT Public Education Awards team with any questions:

Email: [EducationAwards@act.gov.au](mailto:EducationAwards@act.gov.au). Phone: 6205 5570

## Judging process

### Panel composition

Panels will have a minimum of three panel members from the Senior Executive and SOGA levels within the Directorate. Panels are selected so that members have a mix of subject matter expertise and external expertise to provide balanced assessment.

### Assessment process

Panels will assess nominations and then meet to discuss a shortlist. The panel will determine a winner or co-winners for the category, and a small number of finalists.

Nominations received from members of the community or from students may be selected to be awarded a Community Recognition Certificate.

## Notification of results

All nominees will be emailed to advise that they have been nominated, within a week of nomination.

After the panels have met, all nominees will be advised if they have been shortlisted as a finalist, or not successful (end of September 2026).

Finalists will receive information about the Award Ceremony and how many guests they can invite (beginning of October 2026).

Winners will be announced at the Award Ceremony 23 October 2026.

## ACT Public Education Award Categories 2026

Award	Type	Eligibility	Recognises...	Assessment Criteria*
<b>School Leader of the Year</b>	Individual	School leaders	an exceptional school leader who demonstrates outstanding leadership and a commitment to the foundations of the Future of Education strategy.	Alignment with the <b>Future of Education</b> foundations of: Students at the centre, Empowered learning professionals, Strong communities for learning and Systems supporting learning.
<b>Secondary/College Teacher of the Year</b>	Individual	Secondary or college teachers	an outstanding secondary/college teacher who...	
<b>Primary Teacher of the Year</b>	Individual	Primary teachers	an outstanding primary teacher who...	
<b>New Educator of the Year</b>	Individual	Teachers in their first 3 years	an outstanding early career educator who has demonstrated substantial professional growth...	
<b>Mentor of the Year</b>	Individual	Mentors	an exceptional mentor who has a significant impact on the growth, confidence, and capability of fellow educators through guidance, support, and collaboration. This person also...	
<b>Excellence in Leading Impact across our One Public Education System</b>	Group	All employees	teams, schools, clusters of schools or cross-system initiatives that demonstrate outstanding leadership in advancing system-wide priorities through collaboration. Recipients exemplify a commitment to collective leadership by working effectively across schools, the Education Support Office, the early childhood sector, or other stakeholders to achieve meaningful system reform and positive student outcomes in alignment with the <i>Future of Education Strategy</i> .	
<b>Early Childhood Teacher of the Year</b>	Individual	Early Childhood Teachers	an outstanding early childhood teacher who exemplifies excellence in teaching practice and demonstrates commitment to the principles of the <i>Set up for Success strategy</i> .	Alignment with the <b>Set Up for Success/ Future of Education</b> Principles of: Equity, Student agency, Access and Inclusion.
<b>Excellence in Supporting Diversity and Inclusion</b>	Individual or team	All employees	an individual or team who champions inclusive practice and ensures equitable opportunities for all learners and staff. This award celebrates those who bring the principles of the <i>Future of Education and Set Up for Success strategies</i> to life through their actions and leadership.	
<b>Excellence in Cultural Integrity</b>	Individual or team	All employees	an individual or team who champions Cultural Integrity creating meaningful impact for students, families, and communities by bringing the principles of the <i>Cultural Integrity Framework</i> to life through their actions and leadership.	Alignment with the <b>Cultural Integrity</b> Framework domains of: teaching with cultural integrity, engaging with students, families, and community and creating a culture of respect
<b>Learning Support Assistant of the Year</b>	Individual	Learning Support Assistants	an outstanding Learning Support Assistant who improves student learning, wellbeing, and inclusion outcomes through their daily practice...	...exemplifying the <i>ACT Public Service Values</i> of respect, integrity, collaboration and innovation.
<b>School Support Person of the Year</b>	Individual	School-based support staff	an outstanding non-teaching, school-based support staff member who plays a vital role in the effective operation, safety and positive culture of their school community...	
<b>Allied Health Professional of the Year</b>	Individual or team	Allied Health employees	an outstanding allied health professional or team whose expertise, collaboration and commitment enhance student wellbeing, engagement, and learning...	
<b>Education Support Office Employee of the Year</b>	Individual	ESO employees	an outstanding Education Support Office employee whose work enables and strengthens educational outcomes across the system through dedicated service and professionalism...	
<b>Volunteer of the Year</b>	Individual or team	Volunteers	an exceptional volunteer or volunteer team whose time, commitment, and contribution make a meaningful difference to students, schools, and the wider education community...	
<b>Excellence in Innovation</b>	Individual or team	All employees	an individual or team that has made a substantial contribution through a new, improved or transformative service or function, delivering enhanced outcomes to staff and/or students...	
<b>Outstanding Partnership of the Year</b>	School and external partner	All partnerships	an exceptional partnership between a school and an individual, organisation, or group that delivers meaningful and sustained benefits for students and the broader school community...	

\*In addition to the specific criteria listed above, each nomination will be assessed on the number and quality of examples provided, as well as the impact the individual or team has had on students, colleagues, the school, and the broader community.



## Appendix 1 – Category assessment criteria

Each category for the Public Education Awards will be assessed against one of four sets of criteria, depending on the category. Each nomination form will have the criteria as part of the form to assist nominators.

### Foundations of the Future of Education Strategy

Teaching based awards will be based on the four foundations of the Future of Education Strategy. These awards include:

- Primary Teacher of the Year
- Secondary/College Teacher of the Year
- School Leader of the Year
- New Educator of the Year
- Mentor of the Year
- Excellence in Leading Impact across our One Public Education System

Evidence	Four Foundations of Future of Education			
Rating	Students at the Centre	Empowered Learning Professionals	Strong Communities for Learning	Systems Supporting Learning
How does the nominee:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritise and support the engagement of every student in their learning</li> <li>• Empower students to be active participants in their learning, making informed decisions about what and how they learn, as well as how their learning environment operates</li> <li>• Support Student wellbeing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate excellence in the teaching profession</li> <li>• Establish and maintain positive relationships with students, staff and the community</li> <li>• Demonstrate commitment, enthusiasm and capability</li> <li>• Actively pursue professional learning</li> <li>• Collaborate with purpose and positive impact.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the school and its community to act as a hub for education and support services</li> <li>• Collaborate with community members to enable strong supports in and around schools</li> <li>• Work in partnership with families, support staff and other professionals, to enable schools to perform as multi-service environments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and/or support learning initiatives that acknowledge the importance of early intervention and support</li> <li>• Develop and/or support learning initiatives that promote equity of opportunity and excellent outcomes for all learners</li> <li>• Demonstrate use of evidence-based practice, including using data and information to make decisions.</li> </ul>
<b>Nomination provides...against each foundation:</b>	<b>Rating</b>			
<b>No evidence</b> , or examples	Not assessable (1)			
<b>Limited evidence</b>	Fair (2)			
<b>Satisfactory evidence</b>	Good (3)			
<b>High quality evidence</b>	Very Good (4)			
<b>Multiple and/or exceptional evidence</b>	Excellent (5)			



### Principles of Set Up for Success Strategy and the Future of Education Strategy

Two categories will be assessed against the four principles found in both the Set Up for Success and Future of Education Strategies. These awards are:

- Early Childhood Teacher of the Year
- Excellence in Supporting Diversity and Inclusion in Schools

Evidence	Four Principles of Set up for Success/Future of Education			
Rating	Equity	Student Agency	Access	Inclusion
How does the nominee...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support students to succeed, regardless of economic, social and cultural factors.</li> <li>• Demonstrate their support for students according to their personal needs.</li> <li>• Use a differentiated approach, recognising that students have different backgrounds and starting points in their learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable students to make decisions about their learning and how their learning environments operate.</li> <li>• Allow students to have a greater say in what and how they learn.</li> <li>• Encourage students to build their capacity to set goals and take personal responsibility for their success.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate their support for learning and wellbeing to students.</li> <li>• Demonstrate their commitment to knowing their students to enable them as Educators to respond to their individual student's experience.</li> <li>• Encourage and support collaboration between schools, students, families, the community sector and other government services to ensure access to the right supports at the right time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embrace diversity. Where students are accommodated, and a universal sense of belonging is fostered.</li> <li>• Build and maintain thriving and inclusive education community. Students and their families feel welcomed and valued for who they are and what they can contribute.</li> <li>• Foster a sense of belonging to enable each student to achieve their best.</li> </ul>
<b>Nomination provides...against each principle:</b>			<b>Rating</b>	
No evidence, or examples			Not assessable (1)	
Limited evidence			Fair (2)	
Satisfactory evidence			Good (3)	
High quality evidence			Very Good (4)	
Multiple and/or exceptional evidence			Excellent (5)	



## ACT Public Service Values and Signature Behaviours

For our administrative and non-teaching staff, awards will be assessed against the four ACT Public Service Values. These award categories are:

- Learning Support Assistant of the Year
- School Support Person of the Year
- Allied Health Professional of the Year
- Education Support Office Employee of the Year
- Excellence in Innovation
- Volunteer of the Year
- Outstanding Partnership of the Year

Evidence				
ACT Public Service Values and Signature Behaviours				
Rating	Respect	Integrity	Collaboration	Innovation
	Demonstrated respect of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• students, helping them to achieve beyond economic, social, and cultural barriers</li> <li>• colleagues, through listening, supporting, mentoring</li> <li>• families and community</li> <li>• diversity and actively promoting the contribution of all</li> </ul>	Model integrity through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being open and honest</li> <li>• delivering on promises and commitments</li> <li>• working hard and sharing credit</li> <li>• being congruent with words and actions</li> <li>• being transparent and ethical</li> <li>• will have the difficult conversations when needed</li> <li>• holding themselves and other to a high standard</li> </ul>	Demonstrated collaboration by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• created opportunities for collaboration</li> <li>• have they reached out to utilise other expertise within or beyond the school/Directorate</li> <li>• actively modelled collaboration</li> <li>• do they create a safe environment to encourage others to collaborate</li> <li>• do they take pride in being a member of a team and acknowledging the contributions of others</li> </ul>	Demonstrated innovation by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• designed and/or implemented a new or improved solution or process that has resulted in improved business performance</li> <li>• transformed an existing service or function through a novel idea, new technology or calculated approach to risk</li> <li>• demonstrated an openness and commitment to change and working with others to come up with new ideas</li> <li>• created an environment that encourages innovation.</li> </ul>
Nomination provides...against each value:				Rating
No evidence, or examples				Not assessable (1)
Limited evidence				Fair (2)
Satisfactory evidence				Good (3)
High quality evidence				Very Good (4)
Multiple and/or exceptional evidence				Excellent (5)

## Cultural Integrity Framework

Our award for Excellence in Cultural Integrity Practice will be assessed against the three school-based domains of the Cultural Integrity Framework:

Evidence	Three domains of Cultural Integrity		
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Teaching with Cultural Integrity</b>	<b>Engagement with Students, Families and the Community</b>	<b>Building a School Culture of Respect</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports the learning needs and aspirations of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students</li> <li>• Supports other staff to meet the learning needs and aspirations of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students</li> <li>• Creates teaching and learning opportunities where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can see themselves, their cultures, histories and languages in the curriculum</li> <li>• Creates and promotes opportunities across all learning areas and year levels for all students to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, languages, knowledge and ways of knowing</li> <li>• Accesses, develops and shares high quality teaching and learning resources that are age appropriate</li> <li>• Actively collaborates across and within schools to support successful transitions of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Builds genuine, collaborative and respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents, families, local community members, service providers and agencies</li> <li>• Ensures students and families are aware of and are supported to engage in opportunities and events such as scholarships, awards, student forums, extension activities and transition programs</li> <li>• Strives to make parents/families feel supported by and connected to the school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourages and supports Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students to take on leadership roles and/or participate in representative groups such as the SRC, school parliament or the Minister’s Student Congress Student Representative Councils</li> <li>• Leads a whole school approach to building a school culture of respect</li> <li>• Ensures days/weeks of significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are celebrated in meaningful ways</li> </ul>
<b>Nomination provides...against each principle:</b>			<b>Rating</b>
No evidence, or examples			Not assessable (1)
Limited evidence			Fair (2)
Satisfactory evidence			Good (3)
High quality evidence			Very Good (4)
Multiple and/or exceptional evidence			Excellent (5)



**How has the nominee made an impact?**

In addition to evidence provided against one of the above categories, nominees will be assessed on the degree of impact they have made.

IMPACT		Number of People Impacted				
		Single student/colleague	Group of students/colleagues	Whole school/Directorate	More than one school/ another Directorate	Whole school network/ whole of ACTPS
Degree of Impact	Low	1	2	3	3	3
	Medium	2	2	3	4	4
	High	3	3	4	4	5
	Very high	4	4	4	5	5
	Significant	5	5	5	5	5

Impact may be measured in terms of one or more of the following:

- Mindset/attitude/belief change
- Performance increase
- Critical behaviour change
- Processes changed/improved
- Tools/resources created